

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 8-18, and 20-21 are currently pending, Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 20 having been amended, and Claim 19 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The changes and additions to the claims do not add new matter and are supported by the originally filed specification.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 3, 10, 15, and 19 were objected to for informalities; Claims 1-3, 9-12, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Soe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,285,284, hereafter “Soe”); Claims 13, 19, and 20 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but containing allowable subject matter; and Claims 8, 14, 17, 18, and 21 were allowed.

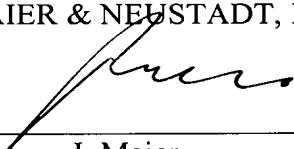
With respect to the objection to Claims 3, 10, 11, 15, and 19, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to Claims 3, 15, and the cancellation of Claim 19, overcome this ground of objection. Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to Claims 10 and 11, which suggested that “a metal powder” on line 7 of Claim 10 should be changed to “the metal powder.” Applicants submit that the recitation of “a metal powder” on line 7 does not refer to the same metal powder recited on line 6.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In view of this indication, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of allowable Claim 19, Claims 10-11 have been amended to incorporate the features of allowable Claim 20, allowable Claim 13 has been amended to be in independent form, and Claim 20 has been amended to be in independent form. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 10, 11, 13, and 20 (and all associated dependent claims) should be indicated as allowed.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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